EVALUATION

Evaluation is essential to the management of your communications program. It enables you to determine if the implementation of your program was effective and if your program met its original objectives. Armed with the results of your evaluation, you can make decisions about modifications needed to improve the initiative. In addition, an effective evaluation can establish credibility of the program within your community and with current and future funding sources.

Note: Your evaluation should assess all elements of the program. While many aspects of evaluation focus on communications—a vital element of the overall evaluation—it is of the utmost importance that your evaluation plan be designed to assess your entire program and whether it achieved its goals and objectives.

There are four main types of evaluation:

Formative evaluation usually takes place during the planning phase of a communications program and provides information on the strengths and weakness of materials or initiative strategies. The results help you to refine your planning process, messages and materials before moving forward. Formative research allows you to explore general knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of your target audience(s) to establish a baseline for your effort. Information for formative evaluation is usually obtained through focus groups and individual interviews with members of the target audience(s), gatekeepers, and other community leaders. Additional information on focus groups, as well as a sample moderator's guide and a focus group screener, is provided in the "Community Assessment" section (Tab D of this toolkit). The cost of this formative evaluation can range from $5,000 to $8,000/group, depending on the market.

Process evaluation takes place during the implementation phase of the initiative and is used to assess whether the tasks, procedures, and activities were conducted as originally planned. It also can be used to measure activities conducted by coalition members. The cost of process evaluation can range from staff labor hours to fees for media monitoring and web site monitoring services.

Impact evaluation is used to determine the short-term effects of the program on the target audience(s), such as an increase in their knowledge and awareness levels or changes in attitudes or behaviors. An impact evaluation usually involves a comparison before and after the program. While changed behavior is the desired outcome, the *It All Adds Up* initiative focuses on changing awareness, knowledge, and attitudes. Pre-campaign telephone surveys can cost as low as $8,000 to as high as $10,000/survey, depending on what you ask and the length of the interview. The same cost and circumstances apply to post-campaign surveys—$8,000 to $10,000/survey, depending on what you ask and the length of the interview.

Outcome evaluation assesses the long-term results of the program, such as a decrease in traffic congestion. Outcome evaluations are usually expensive and require a complex methodology. In addition, it is often difficult to distinguish the outcome of a particular initiative from the effects of other outside variables on the issue (e.g., other initiatives in the community, media coverage, changes in employment, changes in land use, etc.).

As detailed in the research sections of this toolkit (Tabs C and M), the federal partners conducted extensive formative research, including discussion groups with stakeholders, focus groups with the driving public, pilot studies, pre- and post-campaign telephone surveys, and demonstration studies in fourteen communities of various sizes. This research guided the initiative strategy and material development. Therefore, in this section of the toolkit we will focus on process and impact evaluations, because they will give you the information necessary to assess how your initiative is running and how the target audience is reacting to it.

Process Evaluation

A process evaluation will tell you how the program is operating and if you are generating responses from the target audience. It can usually be conducted by program staff using simple record-keeping/tracking systems. The types of information to be measured may include:

- Methods of distribution and quantities of materials sent to your coalition members, distribution channels, media and the target audience(s)
- Exposure to and use of messages and initiative materials by your coalition members, the media, and the target audience(s)
- Number of inquiries received from the target audience(s)
- Adequacy of staffing levels and budget allocations to support the initiative
- Ability to complete activities on schedule

The types of tracking mechanisms you use will depend on the type of information you need. The following chart contains examples of record-keeping tools to help you answer process-related questions.

QUESTION	HOW TO MEASURE	HOW TO USE INFORMATION
How many copies of initiative materials were delivered to each distribution channel?	XRegular inventory of materials	To keep an accurate count of materials available
Did your coalition members distribute/use initiative materials?	XFollow-up telephone calls XSurvey of coalition members	To determine if coalition members are effectively using and distributing materials
Did your coalition members complete tasks for which they were responsible?	XSurvey of coalition members	To modify assignments or responsibilities, as appropriate
Did the media use the materials (e.g., PSAs/paid ads, press releases, etc.) provided?	XAudit of publications XMedia monitoring services (e.g., Burrelle's press clipping service or Video Monitoring Service) XFollow-up telephone calls	To track media coverage and to determine if additional lead time or coalition-member involvement are required to encourage use of the materials
QUESTION	HOW TO MEASURE	HOW TO USE INFORMATION

If your materials included a contact phone number or web address, who often did the target audience contact you, and how did you respond?	XTracking form for phone inquiries and length of time taken to reply XTracking form or hit counter on web site	To determine if and how the information is reaching the target audience(s)
How many people were exposed to the message(s) through program activities?	XEvent attendance records, such as sign-in sheets and head counts	To measure the number of participants reached through specific activities
How much time was devoted to planning and implementing the initiative?	XTrack number of staff hours	To determine how staff allocated their time and make decisions regarding future use of staff
Were the funds designated to implement the program sufficient?	XTrack budget requests and expenditures	To ensure the budget is being allocated effectively
Were activities completed on schedule?	XTrack program timelines and schedules	To determine if deadlines were met

Using these and other questions you develop, you can collect and analyze information that will help you make adjustments that will enable your initiative to run more efficiently and effectively.

Impact Evaluation

Impact evaluation provides information on the target audience's response to the initiative by measuring changes in their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.

Even if you have limited funds, we strongly recommend that you work with someone trained in impact evaluation, because specific skills and knowledge about research design and methodology are needed. You could hire a contacting consultant or a local college or university to determine if they have a research department that might be interested in conducting the evaluation as part of a class project or at a discounted price.

To establish a baseline from which to measure changes in ***Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors (KAB),*** a pre-campaign survey should be administered. When the campaign has ended, a post-campaign survey should be conducted. Compare the results to detect any changes in your target audiences' KAB. Please visit *www.italladdsup.gov* to get questions that have been carefully researched and designed to gather information that is aligned with the *It All Adds Up* objectives of increasing awareness and knowledge of transportation choices that contribute to cleaner air. For your convenience, the questions are available in multiple formats (telephone survey, mail survey, and shopping mall "intercept" survey).

Following are the basic steps to conducting an impact evaluation:

- During the planning phase of your initiative, identify and make arrangements with a consultant or university.

- Identify your target audience(s) and develop questions for the KAB survey.

- Determine the method for administering the KAB survey (e.g., by telephone) and the number of surveys to be completed for the results to be statistically significant.

- Draft the KAB survey and test it with members of the target audience(s) to identify any potential difficulties.

- KAB surveys usually are conducted on a random sample of the public, so if you want to be able to distinguish between specific target audience(s), develop questions that will help you sort out their responses. Remember that this will reduce your sample size, which will affect your ability to make generalizations about those sub-target audiences.

- Make necessary revisions and administer the KAB survey to the target audience(s) before the campaign begins.

- Collect and analyze the results to determine baseline data.

- Introduce the initiative to the target audience(s).

- Administer the same KAB survey soon after your campaign ends.

- Analyze the data to determine changes in the target audiences' KAB.

- Document the findings in a report.

- Use the findings to modify your initiative messages, materials, and activities as appropriate.

A well-planned impact evaluation can help you determine if you met your objectives, assess the overall success of your initiative, and make knowledgeable choices about the future of your program.